

Message Text

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TAGS: EG, IS, PINR

SUBJECT: INTSUM 330 - JUNE 3, 1977

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1. LEBANON. THE SITUATION IN SOUTHERN LEBANON REMAINED TENSE YESTERDAY AS EACH SIDE CONTINUED TO SHELL THE OTHER. THE LEVEL OF ARTILLERY EXCHANGES IS SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH PREVAILED PRIOR TO THE MID-MAY CEASEFIRE. ONE SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE, HOWEVER, IS THAT THE RIGHTISTS, PERHAPS WITH ISRAELI SUPPORT, ARE USING PHOSPHOROUS SHELLS THAT ARE CAUSING SERIOUS DAMAGE TO FIELDS AND GROVES OF LEFTIST-HELD VILLAGES. CONSEQUENTLY, THE CIVILIAN POPULATION IS LEAVING THE AREA.

2. WE BELIEVE THAT THE TENSION THAT HAS FLARED UP NOW IS PART OF A PATTERN IN WHICH HEAVY FIGHTING IS FOLLOWED BY A LULL, DURING WHICH EACH BUILDS UP ITS FORCES AND
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LICKS ITS WOUNDS. EACH SIDE THEN OVEREMPHASIZES THE BUILD-UP OCCURRING IN THE OTHER CAMP AND PROBES FOR WEAKNESSES.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, SMALL CLASHES OCCUR AND DRAW IN LARGER AND LARGER CONTINGENTS FROM THE OPPOSING SIDES.

3. BOTH SIDES APPEAR TO HAVE USED THE LULL IN FIGHTING

LAST MONTH TO IMPROVE THEIR MILITARY POSITIONS. WE HAVE NUMEROUS REPORTS THAT MANY MORE REJECTIONIST PALESTINIANS AND LEBANESE LEFTISTS MOVED INTO THE BORDER AREA IN RECENT WEEKS, IN PART IN ANTICIPATION OF AN ISRAELI ATTACK. ALTHOUGH FATAH HAS BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE A DOMINANT ROLE IN THE SOUTH OVER THE OTHER PALESTINIANS, THE RECENT INFLUX OF REJECTIONISTS MAKES THE SITUATION VERY DIFFICULT FOR FATAH TO CONTROL.

4. THE ISRAELIS ARE GREATLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE BUILDUP OF PALESTINIAN FORCES ALONG THEIR NORTHERN BORDER. THE DEFEAT OF THE RIGHTISTS IN EARLY APRIL PROBABLY HAS CONVINCED THE IDF OF THE NECESSITY TO PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON. AS A RESULT, THE ISRAELIS HAVE CONCENTRATED ADDITIONAL TROOPS ALONG THE BORDER AND HAVE BEEN CHECKING FOR MINES IN THIS AREA, PRESUMABLY ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. ALTHOUGH THE IDF HAS DENIED THAT ITS TROOPS ENTERED THE VILLAGE OF KFAR SHUBA ON TUESDAY, THERE ARE AMPLE PRECEDENTS FOR SUCH ACTION.

5. THE RIGHTISTS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, FOR THEIR PART, ARE INCREASINGLY FRUSTRATED BY THEIR ISOLATION FROM THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. THEY HAVE REPEATEDLY COMPLAINED TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THAT NO ONE CARES ABOUT THEIR DIFFICULT SITUATION. (SECRET)

6. ISRAEL. THE LIKUD HAS DRAFTED A POLICY PAPER, SETTING FORTH THE BASIC POSITIONS OF A LIKUD GOVERNMENT. REGARDING THE MIDEAST ISSUE, THE DOCUMENT SPECIFIES THAT A
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LIKUD-LED GOVERNMENT:

--WOULD ATTEND A GENEVA CONFERENCE;

--IS WILLING TO CONDUCT PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARABS, "EITHER DIRECTLY OR VIA A FRIENDLY COUNTRY," PROVIDED THE TALKS BEGIN WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS; AND

--WILL HONOR "ALL AGREEMENTS" SIGNED BY PREVIOUS ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS.

THE DOCUMENT REPORTEDLY IS CONSIDERED A PRELIMINARY ONE, SUBJECT TO AMENDMENT DURING THE COALITION BARGAINING PROCESS.

7. LIKUD LEADER BEGIN HAS REPORTEDLY CHOSEN SHMUEL KATZ TO REPLACE DINITZ AS ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. KATZ IS CURRENTLY IN THE US AS BEGIN'S PERSONAL EMISSARY TO EXPLAIN THE POLICIES A LIKUD GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE.

(ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS HAVE ALSO SAID THAT DINITZ WILL BE ASKED TO RESIGN.) (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

8. EGYPT. EMBASSY CAIRO REPORTED THAT, ACCORDING TO A FAHMY AIDE, THE VENUE OF THE FAHMY-GROMYKO MEETING IS STILL UNDECIDED. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT FAHMY MAY BE WILLING TO GO TO MOSCOW IF THE SOVIETS AGREE THAT THE NEXT SUCH MEETING BE HELD IN CAIRO. (THE EGYPTIAN DAILY AL-GUMHURIYYAH CLAIMED YESTERDAY THAT VIENNA WOULD BE THE SITE. IN ANY CASE, THE AIDE BELIEVES THE CHANCES ARE ONLY 50-50 THAT THE MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT ALL.) (CONFIDENTIAL)

9. SYRIA. SYRIA'S ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USSR HAS NOT CHANGED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE THE SUMMIT MEETING IN MOSCOW BETWEEN PRESIDENT ASAD AND KEY SOVIET OFFICIALS LAST APRIL, ACCORDING TO US DEFENSE ATTACHE SOURCES. DURING THE DISCUSSIONS, MOSCOW REPORTEDLY HAD GIVEN TEN-SECRET

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TATIVE ASSURANCES THAT THE NEW ARMS AGREEMENT WOULD INCLUDE THE ADVANCED MIG-25/FOXBAT AND T-72 TANKS, BUT NO NEW CONTRACTS ARE KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SIGNED. THE SOVIETS DID REPLY POSITIVELY TO ALL ECONOMIC REQUESTS THAT CENTERED UPON ON-TIME COMPLETION OF EXISTING AID PROJECTS.

10. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED NUMBER OF MILITARY DELIVERIES TO SYRIA SINCE THE TALKS, THE RUSSIANS ARE SAID TO BE FULFILLING ONLY OLD OBLIGATIONS, AND ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT BEING DELIVERED IS CURRENTLY IN SYRIA'S INVENTORY. MOSCOW IS RELUCTANT TO SIGN ANY NEW CONTRACTS WITH DAMASCUS BECAUSE OF THE LATTER'S INABILITY TO REPAY ITS CURRENT DEBT. THERE ARE REPORTS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE AGREED TO A THREE-YEAR MORATORIUM ON THE REPAYMENT OF THE OBLIGATION.

11. ACCORDING TO THOSE SOURCES, 90 T-62 MEDIUM TANKS, EQUIPMENT FOR TWO AIR DEFENSE MISSILES BRIGADES, 122-MM BM-21 ROCKET LAUNCHERS SUFFICIENT TO EQUIP TWO INDEPENDENT BATTALIONS, TRUCKS, AND MISCELLANEOUS SPARE PARTS ARRIVED RECENTLY IN SYRIAN PORTS. (CONFIDENTIAL) CHRISTOPHER

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